



Frequently Asked Questions List 2 April 2025

General

1- I do not know what zone (or zones) my property is located in. How do I find out this information?

You can search for existing land use planning and zoning matters associated with your property, by using the Township's Online GIS Mapping System:

<https://bonfieldtownship.com/en/municipal-services/building-planning/gis-mapping-system>

2- Will the Township be providing more detailed information on its website to explain these changes?

The Township is currently undergoing a comprehensive review of its website, and will provide additional context and information, in a range of different formats, to explain the proposed changes. We will also continue to add '*Frequently Asked Questions*' to the website so everyone in the Township can see how the proposed changes might apply to them.

Our goal here is to ensure **property owners**, **local area developers**, and **entrepreneurs** have the information they need to make informed investment decisions regarding their landholdings in the Township of Bonfield.

3- Will the Township be providing more simplified information on its website to explain these changes?

The Township is currently undergoing a comprehensive review of its website, and will provide additional context and information, in a range of different formats, to explain the proposed changes. We will also continue to add '*Frequently Asked Questions*' to the website so everyone in the Township can see how the proposed changes might apply to them.

Our goal here is to ensure information being shared is **relatable**, **easy-to-understand**, and **accessible** to a range of different user groups.

4- What penalties are being proposed for zoning and building infractions?

Zoning infractions are typically up to a maximum of \$25,000.00. Fines for buildings are regulated by the Ontario Building Code Act and are under the authority of the Province of Ontario. The Municipality has no authority in this matter, except for the Chief Building Official, who is an Officer of the Province of Ontario on Building Code-related matters.

The offences listed in the OBC are as follows:

- For a **person** the maximum fines are \$50,000.00 for the first offence, and up to \$125,000.00 for subsequent offences.
- For **Corporations** the maximum fine for a first offence is \$500,000.00 and \$1,500,000.00 for subsequent offences.

5- How do the penalties work? How will they be enforced?

Enforcement will first begin with education, which will allow for voluntary compliance; then if required, a written letter would be issued. And if matters cannot be resolved, a set fine would be issued. Then if the set fine, or fines are unpaid, the last resort would be court action.

6- Does the Township have to pass all of these by-laws at once?

The Township is not required to pass the proposed new by-laws at once; however, these by-laws have been developed in conjunction with one another over the past two years, and have incurred their first and second reading, so the next step in the process is for Council to determine their outcome.

Read together, the proposed by-laws are designed to reflect the preferred strategic direction of Council, while also, taking into consideration feedback received from interested parties including the Township's Planning Advisory Committee, and members of the public.

The Township of Bonfield's Proposed Short Term Rentals By-law 2025-17

7- What will be the process for undertaking 'Home Inspections' where short-term rentals are concerned?

STR Inspections will focus on life safety components listed in regard to the 'occupancy' of a building in the code, including, but not limited to handrails, guards, stairs, egress windows, windows in bedrooms, smoke and CO Detectors, etc.

It will also serve to verify the classification or recognition of a building (i.e., was the building constructed under authority of a building permit? Is it recognized as a dwelling, having had approval to be occupied as such? Is it recognized by MPAC, etc.

8- Why is the Township limiting the number of Short-Term Rentals to 50?

The Township has received numerous complaints from local area residents in recent years regarding the unauthorized use of properties for the purpose of Short-Term Rentals.

Such complaints include, but are not limited to, access, parking, waste / pollution, unsolicited behaviour, and noise considerations.

The Township is currently only aware of ~25 properties being advertised for Short Term Rentals within the Township; so, the proposal to permit up to 50 in the first instance, on a priority basis, potentially represents a doubling of the existing capacity of the Township to accommodate such uses - in a responsible manner.

The Township of Bonfield's Proposed Trailer By-Law 2025-16

9- People are increasingly choosing to live in makeshift accommodations including sheds, hunt camps, and trailers. What will be done about this?

The Township of Bonfield recognizes that inflationary pressures, and the cost of living, are affecting everyone; and does not seek to introduce any unnecessary burdens on the taxpayers it serves.

At the same time, the Township has a responsibility to protect local area residents and the environment from the unauthorized use of property, buildings, and structures, which are not permitted to be used for human occupation.

The development of unauthorized '*encampments*', in often unsafe and unsanitary conditions, on parcels of vacant land, plus other un-maintained properties throughout the Township, poses a significant health & safety risk to the occupants, neighbouring property owners, and the Township as-a-whole.

Residents voted for change at the last election, and the Township is determined to ensure fairness among all residents in ways that are responsive to the current situation.

10- Will a livestock trailer be a permitted use?

Yes, a livestock trailer, or any other form of trailer that is designed to include space specifically allocated for human habitation would be permitted on a property associated with an existing residence; or, subject to a license, located on vacant land.

11- Where a residence already exists, is it OK to have a trailer on your property?

Yes, the proposed by-law states a Trailer can be positioned on a lot, where a permitted primary dwelling already exists; and that such a trailer can be used between May 1 and December 15 in any given year, and '*stored*' on the property outside these periods, during the winter months.

12- What happens if I have a trailer on my vacant land, but it is not zoned 'Rural'?

Trailers will only be permitted to be *used* on a property that is zoned '*Rural*', subject to the property owner obtaining a license.

Trailers can only be stored in the *rear yard* or *side yard* of other residential zones; notably, the Residential First (R1) and Residential Second (R2) Density Zones (the '*Hamlets*'), and the Residential Limited Services (RLS) Zone (the '*Waterfront*').

For planning purposes, the '*front yard*' in the RLS zone is the waterfront side of the property. Trailers will not be permitted to be used on vacant land in either the R1, R2, or RLS Zones.

13- Can I have a deck in association with my trailer on a vacant property?

Subject to obtaining a license, the owners of vacant land will be permitted to have a trailer, for seasonal use only, between May 1 and December 15 in any given year.

In association with that trailer, property owners are also permitted to construct up to One (1) deck under 108 Sq. Ft. and One (1) shed for the storage purposes only up to 108 Sq. Ft.

14- Can I have a storage shed in association with my trailer on a vacant property?

Subject to obtaining a license, the owners of vacant land will be permitted to have a trailer, for seasonal use only, between May 1 and December 15 in any given year.

In association with that trailer, property owners are also permitted to construct up to One (1) deck under 108 Sq. Ft. and One (1) shed for the storage purposes only up to 108 Sq. Ft.

15- What are the options for managing human waste?

Section 3.14 of the By-law accepts 3 options to dispose of human waste as follows:

1. Using an approved Class IV Sewage System;
2. Using the trailer's manufactured onboard sewage tank, and providing an agreement from a sanitary disposal company to properly dispose of the effluent; and/or
3. Using an outhouse and connection to a grey water system complying with the building code.

16- What fees apply to Trailer licenses?

The fees for a trailer in an approved zone are as follows:

1. \$600.00 per year.
2. \$10.00 for 14 days once per year.
3. \$0.00 if you hold a building permit (conditions apply); Or
4. \$0.00 on a property that currently has a dwelling on it.

The Township of Bonfield's Proposed Zoning By-law 2025-11

Proposed zoning by-law 2025-11 has four main components. Frequently Asked Questions are summarized for each of the proposed permitted uses as follows:

Hunt Camps

17- What is the purpose of this bylaw?

Hunt Camps are not currently a permitted use anywhere in the Township of Bonfield; so, the zoning by-law is intended to permit Hunt Camps within the '*Rural Zone*' only on lots that are greater than 10 Hectares or 25 Acres in size.

18- How does it benefit the community?

Subject to appropriate building permits, Hunt Camps will be recognized as legal '*permitted*' uses which will help safeguard everyone within the Township. Hunt camps can support passive recreational activities and a sustainable northern lifestyle; while fostering an enhanced sense of community. They have the potential to contribute to the social and economic vitality of the Township.

19- How does it affect the individual who presently owns and uses their hunt camp?

The owners of 'Hunt Camps', comprising a 'use' that is not currently permitted anywhere within the Township of Bonfield, will be required to speak with the Township to determine the best course of action for their property.

Where the new proposed zoning requirements **can** be met (i.e. where an established 'primary building' exists on a lot within the 'Rural Zone' that is greater than 10 Hectares or 25 Acres in size) this may simply involve issuing a Building Permit - in accordance with the Ontario Building Code.

20- What existing bylaws are presently on record either allowing hunt camps or preventing their use? Please cite by-law numbers and dates that these bylaws were passed.

Zoning by-laws are exclusionary in nature. Therefore, if the use is not specifically mentioned in a zoning by-law, then the use is prohibited.

Hunt Camps have never been a permitted use in the Township of Bonfield and, as such, they are currently prohibited. Until this proposed amendment, the Township is not aware of any by-law having been passed which would permit the use of Hunt Camps in any prescribed zones within the Township.

The proposed amendment to the zoning by-law seeks to change this; to now permit Hunt Camps in the 'Rural Zone', on lots greater than 10 Hectares or 25 Acres in size, within the Township of Bonfield.

21- If the person who owns these 'hunt camps' wants to continue using these buildings will they be allowed to do so? If not, what will they have to do to be able to continue using their hunt camp?

The owners of 'Hunt Camps', comprising a 'use' that is not currently permitted anywhere within the Township of Bonfield, will be required to speak with the Township to determine the best course of action for their property.

Where the new proposed zoning requirements **can** be met (i.e. where an established 'primary building' exists on a lot within the 'Rural Zone' that is greater than 10 Hectares or 25 Acres in size) this may simply involve issuing a Building Permit - in accordance with the Ontario Building Code.

22- Will existing hunt camps be allowed to be (grandfathered) as a "Legal non-conforming" use of these buildings?

A legal non-conforming use is a lawfully recognized use that pre-exists the enactment of a zoning by-law. It is a statutory recognition that a use may remain legal even though it may not precisely conform to the zoning constraints subsequently enacted and currently in force.

In this instance, Hunt Camps have never been considered a legal ‘permitted’ or recognized use, as Hunt Camps by definition were not subject to any by-law passed by the Township. In this regard, in accordance with Section 34(9)(b) of the *Ontario Planning Act 1990*, which applies to ‘**Excepted lands and buildings**’, the proposed amendment to the zoning by-law does not apply where the by-law would:

*‘Prevent the erection or use for a purpose prohibited by the by-law of any building or structure **for which a permit has been issued under subsection 8 (1) of the Building Code Act, 1992**, prior to the day of the passing of the by-law, so long as the building or structure when erected is used and continues to be used for the purpose for which it was erected and provided the permit has not been revoked under subsection 8 (10) of that Act’.*

In this context, only buildings and structures that existed prior to the *Ontario Planning Act 1990* might be considered legal non-conforming for planning purposes.

23- If hunt camps are not on private land that is less than the prescribed acreage, but adjacent to crown land will they still be allowed?

As the by-law is written, Hunt Camps will only be permitted on properties within the *Rural Zone* that are greater than 10 Hectares or 25 Acres in size. An exception to this rule, would be if a permit for a Hunt Camp were previously issued under subsection 8 (1) of the Building Code Act, 1992.

Notwithstanding this point, property owners may be able to apply for a *minor variance* to reduce these provisions provided it can be demonstrated the proposed *Hunt Camp* would not result in land compatibility issues and concerns.

To clarify, hunters will still be able to ‘*hunt*’ on Crown Land and/or Rural-zoned properties less than 10 Hectares or 25 Acres in size, in accordance with all other applicable laws. However, ‘*Hunt Camps*’ will only be considered a permitted use on lots that meet the minimum size requirement - unless a permit was previously issued under subsection 8 (1) of the Building Code Act, 1992; Or, a minor variance application has been submitted to, and approved by, the Township of Bonfield.

Additional Dwelling Units

Questions?

Accessory Structures with a House Permit

Questions?

Shipping Containers

24- If my lot is large enough, can I have 2 or more 20’ x 8’ Shipping Containers or Storage Buildings provided that I meet all lot line setbacks?

Yes, property owners are permitted to have more than one accessory structure (which includes Shipping Containers) on their property; so long as the total lot coverage for all buildings and structures does not exceed **15%**.

Only Shipping Containers with a maximum floor space area of less than 161.5 Sq Feet and proposed for storage purposes only benefit from permitted development rights and do not, therefore, require a building permit.

Shipping Containers, or other accessory structures, are not permitted to be placed adjacent to one another or modified in any way; without a valid building permit first being obtained. In all cases, they cannot be ‘stacked’ or exceed a maximum height of 5 meters.

25- Larger Shipping Containers measuring 8’ X 40’ will require a building permit. Since I am not “building” this Shipping Container, will the cost of the permit be reduced to that necessary for the Inspector to only attend the property, and ensure satisfactory setbacks are being met in relation to the lot boundary lines?

Under the Act, a building permit is not only required for *construction* but also for **placing** a building on a lot. Shipping containers over 161.4 sq ft are buildings and have always required a permit and, as such, are regulated by and subject to the Ontario Building Code regulations. Given the feedback received, staff and council are committed to reviewing this matter.

26- Is it correct that as soon as a building permit is taken out for a Shipping Container or any storage building larger than 161.4 Square Feet, that MPAC is notified and this could result in a possible property reassessment? Is it possible to just have a ‘location fee’ instead of a building permit for storage buildings that result in the cleaning up of people’s property?

Yes, a copy of each building permit is submitted to MPAC. In regard to whether a ‘location fee’ could be applied, the answer is unfortunately ‘No’. The Ontario Building Code is the only authority having jurisdiction in regard to the requirement to obtain a building permit, and the municipality cannot enact a By-law to supersede the code.

27- Since many people already have Shipping Container(s) on their properties, what will be the process required to legalize their possession, and the use of these Shipping Containers? Will existing Shipping Containers be deemed Legal non-conforming uses?

Legal non-conforming is a zoning term which describes a building where the current use of the building would be prohibited except where such building and its use predates a by-Law prohibiting such use.

Legal non-conforming uses do not apply to the building code nor a structure that was constructed or placed without the authority of a building permit where the building code was implemented.

Therefore, since a shipping container over 161.4 Sq. Ft has always required a building permit and that the use of which was never permitted in Bonfield they would not be exempted nor “grand fathered.”